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Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 01421 241044Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 1421

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MARR, SO, US
SUBJ: MILITARY SURVEY TEAM FOR SOMALIA

REFS: A) STATE 125831; B) STATE 161506

1. EMBASSY MEMBER OF MILITARY SURVEY TEAM CALLED ON COL. MOHAMED SHEIKH, HEAD OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF MINISTRY OF DEFENSE JUNE 24. COL. MOHAMED WAS ACCOMPANIED BY LT. COL (NAVY) SAID, HIS DEPUTY, AND LT. COL. AHMED, WHO SERVED AS INTERPRETER.

2. COL. MOHAMED BEGAN THE MEETING BY SAYING THAT THE MIN OF DEF HAD BEEN TOLD TO EXPECT THE SURVEY TEAM ON JULY 10, AND WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF THE TEAM'S VISIT AND PROGRAM. ACCORDING TO COL. MOHAMED, THE SOMALIS HAD ENVISIONED, SUBJECT TO OUR CONCURRENCE, WORKING LEVEL DISCUSSIONS IN MOGADISCIO AT THE MINISTRY, FOLLOWED BY A VISIT TO THE MILITARY ACADEMY, AND THEN VISITS TO ACTIVE OPERATIONAL UNITS IN HARGEISA AND BERBERA.

3. EMBOFF TOOK THE OCCASION TO CONVEY THE POINTS IN REFTEL A, (AND REPEATED IN REFTEL B,) EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN AT THE RECENT REPORTS OF SOMALI ACTIVITY IN THE OGADEN. COL. MOHAMED REPLIED THAT SOMALIA WAS OF COURSE GIVING MORAL SUPPORT
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TO THE WSLF, BUT THAT THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY WAS NOW PREOCCUPIED WITH THE INTERNAL DEFENSE OF SOMALIA, AND THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE WSLF. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE VISIT OF THE SURVEY TEAM WOULD PROVIDE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPERIENCED MILITARY OFFICERS TO JUDGE THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH FOR THEMSELVES FIRSTHAND,

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WITHOUT RELYING ON SECONDHAND REPORTS, MOST OF WHICH WERE ERRONEOUS.

4. EMBOFF PRESENTED COL. MOHAMED WITH A COPY OF THE NOTE SETTING FORTH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SURVEY TEAM, AND ORALLY DREW ATTENTION TO THE STATEMENT THAT THE SENDING OF A TEAM IN NO WAY OBLIGATED THE U.S. TO PROVIDE ANY MILITARY EQUIPMENT. COL. MOHAMED STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THIS POINT. HE ADDED THAT AS A MILITARY MAN HE WAS RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS POLITICAL QUESTIONS, BUT EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL HOPE THAT ANY POLITICAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE SOLVED IN ORDER THAT SOMALIA COULD RECEIVE ASSISTANCE IN ITS DEFENSE.

5. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ON THE SUBJECT, COL. MOHAMED SAID THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WAS ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR A CANDIDATE TO BE NAMED AS SOMALI MILITARY ATTACHE TO WASHINGTON, BUT INDICATED THAT A FINAL DECISION ON THIS POINT WOULD AWAIT THE VISIT OF THE MILITARY SURVEY TEAM.

6. EMBOFF ALSO INFORMED COL. MOHAMED OF THE VISIT OF CODEL LEGGETT IN EARLY JULY, AND TOOK THE OCCASION TO EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS.

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7. COL. MOHAMED CLOSED THE MEETING BY REQUESTING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON THE TEAM'S DESIRES, SO THAT THE SOMALIS COULD FORMULATE A MORE DETAILED PROGRAM OF VISITS AND CONSULTATIONS, AS WELL AS ORGANIZE AN APPROPRIATE SOCIAL SCHEDULE.

8. COMMENT: DESPITE THE NON-COMMITTAL RESPONSE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED SHERIF WHEN THE CHARGE PROPOSED THE DATE OF JULY 10 FOR THE VISIT OF THE SURVEY TEAM, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAD PROCEDED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE DATE WAS FIRM AND THAT IT HAD BEEN FORMALLY ACCEPTED BY THE GSDR. IN ANY CASE, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAD ALREADY BEGUN PLANNING FOR THE VISIT AND NOW WISHES TO GET INTO DETAILS.

9. REFTEL B ARRIVED WHEN EMBASSY OFFICER WAS ALREADY ENROUTE TO THIS EARLY MORNING APPOINTMENT WHICH WAS SCHEDULED ON JUNE 21. IN PLANNING THIS EXPLORATORY SESSION EMBOFF WAS BRIEFED TO SAME POINTS REGARDING SUPPORT TO WSLF AND NON-COMMITMENT BY THE US TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT TO SOMALIA. IN FACT, ONE REASON

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FOR APPOINTMENT WAS TO ENSURE THAT MINDEF UNDERSTOOD
PRECISE TERMS OF SURVEY TEAM AGREEMENT. EMBOFF TOOK
COPY OF OUR EARLIER NOTE TO MFA AND REVIEWED IT WITH
DEFENSE OFFICERS WITH THAT OBJECTIVE IN MIND.
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